GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1977
ANSWERED ON:21.07.2004
DECLINE IN CHILD SEX RATIO
Reddy Shri S.P.Y.

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has already been decline in the child sex ratio in the country during the last 50 years;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for constant decline in the ratio of girl child vis-Ã -vis the male child; and

(c) the steps taken so far to arrest this trend and the extent of success achieved?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a): Yes Sir.

(b) The Child Sex Ratio (number of girls per 1000 boys) in the age group of 0-6 years has declined from 976 in 1961 to 927 in 2001.

Son preference, neglect of the girl child resulting in higher mortality at younger age, female infanticide, female foeticide and male bias in enumeration of population are some of the reasons commonly put forward to explain the consistently low levels of sex ratio.

(c) In order to contain the practice of female foeticide, which is one of the main reasons for fall in sex ratio adverse to female population, the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 was brought in to operation from 1.1.1996. The said Act has since been amended to make it more stringent. The Implementation of the Act rest with the States and Union Territories through the Appropriate Authorities appointed under the Act at State, district as well at sub-district levels. The States/UTs have been requested to ensure wide publicity to the provisions of the Act and Rules and to effectively implement the same in letter and spirit.

It is, nevertheless, recognized that mere legislation is not enough to deal with this problem that has roots in social behavior and prejudices. Various activities have been undertaken to create awareness against the practice of pre-natal determination of sex and female foeticide through Radio, Television, and print media units. Workshops and seminars are also been organized through Voluntary Organizations at State/regional/district/block levels to create awareness against this social evil. Cooperation has also been sought from religious leaders, as well as medical fraternity to curb this practice.

Recently, the Government of India has launched `Save the Girl Child Campaign` with a view to lessen son preference by highlighting achievements of young girls.